101 Example: Those of Bélédougou are the Bélédugu-ka-u;
Those of Kaarta are the Kaarta-n-ka-u;
Those of Ségou are the Ségu-n-ka-u ...

Each of these expressions has at the same time a political significance. Ségu-n-ka-u means the people of the party in power at Ségou. The context alone determines which people are meant.

[2] Among themselves, the Bambara factions sometimes [552] call each other by nicknames: of the people of Ségou, the people of Kaarta say ironically, "those of Tu-kele-u" (those of the single braid), alluding to their coiffure, or else Nya-ni-nyele-u, "those of Nya and Nyélé" (Nya and Nyélé are women's names common at Ségou). All the members of a clan may also be grouped under a term derived from the name of the founder or ancestor of the clan: the people of Kaarta may call themselves Nya-Ngolo-la (the people of Nya-Ngolo, ancestor of the clan); the people of Ségou may be called Barama-Ngolo-la (the people of Barama-Ngolo, ancestor of the clan).

There are also nicknames for individuals of other tribes. [186] The Bambara are called Dyonko (slaves) by the Soninké, who long exploited the Bambara for the slave trade, while the Bambara in turn call the Soninké the Marka Dialan'u (Marka Seer), because they gave up their own dialect for the Bambara dialect.

II. Situation

A. Ethnic Classification

● 144

Delafosse has made a broad classification of the peoples inhabiting Upper Senegal and Niger. Unfortunately, this classification too often mixes language and physical traits. Thus, he puts the Bambara in the Mandé family, which is divided into three groups comprised of these main peoples:

First group (northern): three peoples, the Bozo, the Soninké (or Sarakolé or Marka), and the Dioula.

Second group (central): five peoples, the Kagoro, the Banmana (or Bambara, including the Somono caste), the Kassonké (or Mandingue [Mandingo]), and the Foulanké.

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Third group (southern): four peoples, the Diallonké [Dialonke], the Samo, the Samorho, and the Sia; plus four small tribes of doubtful classification, the Blé, the Natioro, the Ouara, and the Sembla.

More recent studies by Urvoy, Dr. Pales, and Mlle. Tassin de Saint-Péreuse involving very numerous measurements will soon permit determination of the racial characteristics of the Sudanese populations and the establishment of a new classification.

B. Geographical Distribution

131 In his study of the Bambara of Ségou, Charles Monteil tells us that it is impossible to determine what the precise boundaries of the Bambara empire were, because a frontier as we understand it has no meaning for the Black. The empires did not seek to dominate such and such a region; their goal was, above all, the exploitation of the greatest possible number of individuals, without regard to localities or races.

131 At the present time, the Encyclopédie coloniale et maritime [Colonial and Maritime Encyclopedia] considers that [3] the Bambara 162 form a group of about a million individuals who extend west-east from the region of Siguirio as far as Macina along both sides of the Niger and the Bani rivers, and south-north from the Ivory Coast and Upper Volta to Sahel de Nioro. In addition, there are 40,000 in Senegal: peanut farmers near Kaolack, Thiès, and Diourbel, and captives at Fouta Toro, Saint-Louis, etc. But they are most numerous in the circles [a "circle" is an administrative division] of Bamako (310,000), Ségou (190,000), and Bougouni (110,000). To [563] these one may add 125,000 Métis [mixed bloods], Peul-Bambara, of whom 72,000 live in the Bougouni circle alone.

131 More precisely, the great mass of the Bambara is distributed 619 in a region that may be delimited as follows.

To the northwest, three tribes have been catalogued in the Kaarta: the Dianguirté in the circle of Nioro, the Niamassa at Nioro, and the Massassi to the south of Nioro.

To the north, in the Sahel, the region of Bakounou and Waghadou is inhabited by the Kalongo tribe.

To the northeast, the Bambara live in the Macina, the Issa Ber, the region of Goundam, and up to Timbuktu.

144 771 which encompasses all social, technical and economic activities" (1)

1. G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion], P.U.F., 1951.

of this people. The myths are "a sum of knowledge, wisdom, and not a series of fixed etiological recitations. One may say that they constitute a metaphysic including the knowledge of created things, as well as the principles of their state of being and of their action." (2)

2. Id., ibid.

171 771 Thorough investigation of other Sudanese peoples has revealed that the Bambara religion is part of a pan-Sudanese system in which differences lie in the modes of expression and not in the essence of the thought.

A. Cosmogony

772 The Bambara conceive the world as a mass of active forces which man can influence. Thanks to certain techniques, the pivotal one being the blood sacrifice, man may amass or liberate these forces, may direct and orient them; in short, man may have a hand in the movement of the world and may aid it in its consciousness and accomplishment. This central role of man is explained to us by the order of creation itself, which governs all the rites to which man is subject. The Bambara conceive the world as having issued from an 773 original void which was endowed with movement (3): the gla. This

3. Passim, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

void emitted a voice which created its double, and from the couple came a humid substance, zo sumale (cold rust), which formed hard shining bodies. After a series of movements and transformations, there was an explosion between the two gla, which caused the ejection of a hard and powerful matter that vibrated as it fell. Out of this vibration came signs which settled on all the things as yet uncreated to designate them. Then, man's consciousness detached itself from the gla and settled on things to awaken their consciousness in naming them. In the